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OUR DUTY TO OUR CITIZEN SOLDIERS.

BY LIEUTENANT J. A. DAPRAY, U. S. A.

HOWEVER much public opinion in this country may have divided in times past respecting the necessity or wisdom of a permanent military establishment, it would seem that the era has at last arrived when vital interests demand that the question receive the deliberate, fair, and intelligent consideration which is necessary to determine the extent to which a safe and judicious government must rest on efficient military organization.

There has never been a time in our history when some recognized national leader, wiser and bolder than the average, has not vainly sought to impress upon the law-makers the necessity for military preparedness. Washington, before and after our National independence had been secured; Alexander Hamilton, in his commentaries on constitutional enactments and his estimate of the insufficiency of the militia system; Henry Knox, Secretary of War; Eustis, after his trouble with the New England militia; James Monroe, author of the doctrine that the National authority was superior to that of the State over the militia in time of war; President Madison, whose two Secretaries of War, even while battles raged, resigned their portfolios, declaring the militia system a failure; John C. Calhoun, who fearlessly advocated the absolute necessity of maintaining a military army in keeping with the enlarged population and increasing resources of the country; General Jackson and other commentators on the Seminole-Indian wars; all these and many others more recent, whose voices were lifted out of the early disasters of our great Civil War, have urged the need of a more perfect military establishment than has ever existed in this country. Without exception, too, all of our military scientists have repeatedly proclaimed the necessity for better military organization.

Nevertheless, against all modern principles of self-government and all demands for adequate military protection of our magnificently developed resources, minor politics holds to the theory that the government of the United States was established upon a fixed and never-to-be-changed non-military basis. In refutation of such arguments, however, the Constitution itself might be quoted, for in it is found authority for Congress "to define and punish offences against the law of nations," "to raise and support armies," "to provide and maintain a navy," "to make rules for the government of the land and naval forces," and "to provide for the calling forth of (a well regulated) militia to execute the laws of the Union, to suppress insurrection and to repel invasions." Indeed, we find the most ample authority, specifically set forth in careful language, for that elastic, progressive military establishment, which doubtless the founders of this government foresaw would in time become necessary. As if to declare their confidence in the two great powers of the State, the civic and the military, and to indicate the close relationship which should at all times exist between them, the makers of the Constitution provided that the President of the United States, elected by the people as a civic chief, should also be the commander-in-chief of the army and navy. Who, then, can gainsay the fact that the theory of our government, as manifested in the Constitution itself, was from the beginning in favor of the sensible, economical, safe political doctrine that in time of peace we should prepare for war.

But admitting, for argument's sake, that the innate or inherited prejudice against a regular army which prevailed during the earlier stages of our governmental development, tended to create political opposition against all military improvement; and conceding, too, that like our English ancestors we have had our eras of suspicion and dread of military ascendancy, is there a school of politicians now so narrow as to perceive danger at this time in perfecting that one branch of our government whose weakness, resulting from long neglect, imparts a weakness to all? As President Lincoln once said: "Surely each man has as strong a motive now to preserve our liberties as each had then to establish them;" and as he added in another message: "As our case is new, so we must think anew and act anew. We must disenthrall ourselves, and then we shall save our country."

To the man who perceives occasion for alarm in a duly organized military system, let it be recalled that the future war armies of the United States, like those of the past, will be composed of citizen patriots, whose patriotism, impelling them to risk life in defence of country, would never permit them to menace its institutions or to endanger its liberties. The military power in the United States was never so great as in 1865, when General Grant, in command of over a million civic soldiers, after the object of war had been attained, quietly laid aside his sword to become the people's leader in their civic affairs.

During the first year of the Civil War 553,492 men were in active field service, and when the Confederate banners were lowered at Appomattox there were 1,034,064 Union soldiers under arms. At that time some political prophets were apprehensive lest that great military legion could not safely be returned to their homes. The War Department records, however, show the extraordinary fact that within two months and seven days after the 29th of May, 1865, 640,806 men were mustered out of the military service and started on the homeward march to the loved ones so anxiously awaiting them, the remainder of the volunteers following afterwards.

Verily, a military power so huge as that, which proved itself loyal to the institutions of government when military power itself was supreme, could well be trusted when circumscribed in time of peace by the law of the land which they are sworn to uphold.

In the United States we have never had a war army that was not almost entirely composed of the civic reserve soldier. It is true that the law maintains a small standing regular army, whose peace footing in the past ninety years has varied from eight thousand to twenty-seven thousand men, but in time of war heretofore no effort seems to have been made to enlarge permanently the standing army. During the war of 1812 and 1814, greater use was made of the regular army than in any subsequent war, on account of the absolute failure of the militia to meet the requirements. In the Mexican war the experiment of raising volunteers was tried, but it was not until 1863 that Congress legalized the volunteer system and gave to the President of the United States the unlimited power in war to call forth whatever number of men he might deem necessary for defence.

Now, it should be noted that, however jealous the civic legislators may be of the establishment of military power, when war is threatened all rush to provide for what they are pleased to term the national emergency. In 1812 there was no quartermaster, commissary, or ordnance department in our army, and, if the official historian of that war is to be believed, all of the early disasters and humiliations suffered by our army in the field were due to the lack of clothing, of arms, and munitions of war, for which governmental parsimony, made necessary through the want of proper military legislation, was responsible. In the War of 1812 quartermasters, commissaries, and ordnance officers, appointed only after the national emergency had occurred, were compelled to formulate their systems of supplies almost under fire. During the Seminole Indian Wars thirty millions of dollars had to be expended in twenty-five years to accomplish what might have been accomplished in the first year had ample provision been made to prevent the immense loss of life that followed. In 1861, even with an extra force and enlarged facilities, the Springfield Armory, then the only Federal gunshop in the Union, manufactured but 13,802 guns, whereas under the calls for troops in that year 700,680 men were supposed to be under arms. At the time of that national emergency it became necessary to ransack the junk-shops and outhouses of European arsenals for arms to equip the legions that took the field, and no one can estimate the loss of life which our unpreparedness for that war entailed upon our people. Only lately it was found necessary in another national emergency to adopt drastic measures for the public defence, and suddenly the propositions, which for thirty years had been vainly recommended by military scientists to Congress for adoption, were hurriedly approved of in hastily enacted laws.

Even recently, when in an outburst of patriotism fifty millions of dollars were appropriated for immediate expenditure for national defences, much, if not all, of the money thus paid for foreign labor could have been distributed among our own people, had that measure for defence been more timely inaugurated. The willingness and capacity of law makers to meet the emergencies of national peril are laudable, but need it be said that all emergency measures are necessarily less carefully devised than those which are framed with calm and deliberate judgment.

Besides, while in national emergencies ploughshares may be quickly turned into bayonets and defences hurriedly completed, not all the millions in the treasury can change the uninstructed citizen into a trained soldier.

The time has come when better understanding between the people and their leaders should prevail. If the Constitution imposes upon the citizen the obligation of military service in the time of emergency the people should not be deprived in time of peace of ample opportunity to be instructed and prepared, at least in the elementary duties of the soldier. There are those who find in the past achievements of our people and their eagerness in time of war, a ready answer to all suggestions regarding the necessity of war preparations. Because untutored civic soldiers during our great war rushed from the field, the workshop, the counting room, the factory, the store, and the quiet home, to learn their first military lesson on battle-fields, the political economists assert that, with such a people in reserve, neither military organization nor military instruction is at all necessary before war is declared. Alas, the political economists are as a rule military theorists only! Their knowledge of wars is not generally derived from personal observations of battle-fields. They do not hear the groans of dying soldiers, nor do they count the lives which proper military organization and timely military training might have spared to our people in every war they have fought.

The fact that the only law on the statute books providing for the organization and armament of the militia of the States was passed over a hundred years ago speaks eloquently of omission and oversight on the part of those charged with the duty of providing for the well regulated militia of the constitution. If the militia were armed and equipped in accordance with the provisions of that law it would become the gey of nations. Think of a modern people governed by a law which provides for the ludicrous spectacle of a dragoon armed with pistol and pistol holster covered with bearskin, or a rifleman armed with flintlock musket and carrying bullet pouches and powder horns! Yet such is the requirement of that un repealed militia law, which no political power has yet been bold enough or wise enough to attack.

The strategy of war may never change, but the tactics of battlefields are constantly changing and being modified with the

advance of military science and improved weapons. Over a quarter of a century ago it was deemed advisable to send the greatest tactician in the American army, with a corps of able assistants, to travel around the world and ascertain the improvements in military organizations. The report of that commission was commended to Congress by the President of the United States, and for twenty-five years since has been constantly urged upon the attention of Congress by every President and Secretary of War, but it still awaits action. What we need in this country is careful attention to what military experts proclaim to be necessary for improvement in our military system—improvement which should be made before the battle begins. We need a careful analysis of the whole question of military necessities and organization.

We need now as we have needed since the War of 1812 a military commission, or a commission of well informed civic legislators, to determine the best policy for a reserve military. It is not intended to advocate the establishment at this time of a "regular" army in keeping with the increased size of our population; but it is intended to suggest that in a country where every man is presumed to be a possible soldier, a larger army than that we now have of 25,000 men could be wisely maintained, for the dual purpose of keeping intact a necessary element of government and of maintaining a medium for practical military instruction of the masses.

But aside from whatever argument may be made in respect of a large standing army, the purpose of this paper being in behalf of what is due to the citizen soldier of the land, it is argued that one of the first duties of the government now is to formulate a system for organization, armament, and mobilization of a military reserve force. With over fourteen millions of arms-bearing men and 112,000 uniformed militia, a military commission or a legislative committee, charged with the adjudication of the question, would find a splendid basis of operation. The Federal government should have authorized voice in militia organization and the President should have constitutional right in time of peace to call out the militia for the purpose of either drill, inspection or instruction. When in 1893 it was proposed to mobilize a hundred thousand men at or near the Columbian Exposition to show the world the capacity of the government to

mobilize under our volunteer military system, it was found there was no Federal authority for the scheme, which depended solely upon the pleasure of the various State commanders-in-chief.

Notwithstanding all the achievements of our volunteer armies in our two last wars, it must be conceded that in any war likely again to occur it would be exceedingly hazardous, not to say positively fatal, to follow the experiment of a McClellan volunteer army. That army had arrayed against it a mass of newly-made soldiers but little superior, in a military sense, to the men of the North, and yet even that little superiority told ; for, as a famous general once asserted, nearly all of the early disasters on the Federal side during the Civil War were due to the rawness and inexperience of the freshly enrolled Union soldiers. If there is another war our enemy will be one or more of the military nations of Europe, whose soldiers will not be inexperienced. Said Lord Wolseley, in a warning to the British government : " You may collect together in a few months a great mass of armed men that will do to fight another mass of men similarly organized and constituted, but all experienced soldiers know how ridiculous it would be to send newly raised and untrained levies into action against a well established army."

The people have never before appeared so anxious for military enlightenment and training as now, and in a country where the law theoretically holds every male person between the ages of 18 and 45 liable to military duty, the people have a right to some of that military knowledge which is now spreading over the entire world. The people want to be educated in military science and tactics. Every year colleges, schools, and universities are petitioning Congress for military instructors, and, notwithstanding that only a few years ago the number for that purpose was doubled, not half the colleges which desire military instruction can have an officer detailed. At every State military encampment army officers are asked for. Many of the Governors have regular army officers detailed to assist State officials, and even the common schools are clamoring to have military instructors detailed to supervise their drills.

All these signs have an unmistakable meaning. The people desire that their youth shall be drilled. Mere drill, it is true, does not make a good soldier, but drill will make a natural soldier a better soldier and more subject to discipline in an emergency.

In a paper on military instruction, referring to the proposition to reduce the expenses of the military establishment, John C. Calhoun, then Secretary of War, said in 1820 : "Economy is certainly a very high political virtue, intimately connected with the power and public wishes of a community. In military operations, which, under the best management, are expensive, it is of the utmost importance; but by no propriety of language can that arrangement be called economical which, in order that our military establishment in peace should be rather less expensive, would, regardless of the purposes for which it ought to be maintained, render it unfit to meet the dangers incident to a state of war."

It was also one of the terse assertions of Mr. Calhoun that "no truth is better supported by history than that, the circumstances being nearly equal, victory will be on the side of those who have the best instructed soldiers." The great Napoleon who produced the military axiom that "Heaven is on the side of the strongest battalions," afterwards modified that high sounding dogma by declaring that competency of officers, and especially of subalterns, gave the most valued strength to the backbone of an army.

Following the thought of those two great men, the important question confronts us, how can we best provide a system for officering a million of civic soldiers who must be ready for the field in our next war? Admitting that from among the fourteen million of arms-bearing citizens we may be able to gather an army of able bodied men equal to the hardships of field service, capable of learning within a brief period enough of the rudiments of military drill to enable them to move in column and form in line of battle; admitting that they will take naturally to the rifle and be able to handle it with that calmness, coolness and precision which modern fire-discipline requires on battle-fields; admitting that the great mass of private soldiers and petty non-commissioned officers may be quickly massed in an emergency; it is nevertheless a fact that the most serious problem of our next war will be the securing of competent and trained men to act as officers and leaders of this great army we are counting upon in reserve. Bear in mind that aside from the private military schools where a limited degree of military training is conducted, the only Federal military establishment in this

country graduates on an average only about fifty young officers annually. Assuming that the limit of age for the officers of the volunteer forces in time of war will correspond to the limits prescribed for the soldier, viz.: 18 to 45 years of age, it must be borne in mind that if war should occur to-morrow only 1,200 men who graduated in the past twenty years at the age of twenty-one would be eligible within the forty-five years' limit. But are not all of the officers that have graduated up to date needed for the present small regular military establishment? To officer an army of one million men would require 35,000 regimental officers alone, to say nothing of the large number required for the staffs of armies, corps, divisions, and brigades. From whence could that number of experienced or competent men be drawn? It is true in our late war, it is asserted, one New York regiment alone furnished over 600 officers, but that was an exceptional case. Doubtless, there are regiments in the National Guard of the States and companies in the States that could supply a large number of officers, but it is respectfully submitted that the time has come when military statesmanship should give more thought to the leadership of men than has been done heretofore. New York State organizations should not be expected or required to furnish officers for Kansas or Idaho. Each State, under a generally well fostered rule, should be assisted to maintain State pride by having State troops officered by competent State officers.

There has been a great revolution in war methods within the past generation and vast improvements have been made in war implements. Military leadership is no longer within the reach of every civic layman. Even the born soldier, so-called, must know something more than how to draw the sword; and the usefulness of the leader in battle will depend more upon knowledge of soldiery and military training than upon individual acts of gallantry or personal example of bravery. The officer must be able to teach, direct, train, and instruct the raw material which he will find in the massive ranks of the volunteers. Since the government relies for defence chiefly upon volunteer armies, it is a poor policy, if not a fatal one, to postpone the organization, drill, and discipline of the reserve until they are needed in war. Drill and discipline presuppose organization and are prerequisites to battlefield success. In the war of Secession, as Major-General Merritt asserts, it took one year to prepare our volunteers for

combat, and that policy, due chiefly to the lack of experienced officers, bad enough then, would be more fatal in any future war. The periods of our wars are lessening as weapons are improved and their tactical uses perfected. War, it must be remembered, is "a method of compulsion used by one nation against another." It has been defined to be a duel between nations wherein might is superior to right. The future wars must be of more gigantic magnitude than ever before. The nation that is but half ready at the declaration of war, if the antagonist be equally strong and fully trained and equipped, is more than half whipped before the first battle. Indeed, as Major-General Merritt says in his criticism, which is on the reference list of every military library in the world: "No war between war-making powers of Europe in the last thirty years has taken the time that would be necessary to prepare the best reserves we have for the field." Those who count in war chiefly, if not alone, on the bravery and patriotism of our untrained people are reminded that, while military enthusiasm and national patriotism are undoubtedly marked American characteristics, the admonition must be recalled that "enthusiasm and patriotism alone will not gain battles, but may add to the gravity of disaster."

What this country needs is that sort of military statesmanship which will recognize the inevitable in time of war, be guided by the experiences of war, and look with open eyes to the certain effects of given causes and conditions. Then will the fullest military capacity of the people of this American republic be demonstrated. Proud as have been past achievements, no man can estimate the future of a country whose vast resources are amply protected by a suitable military system of defense. It is not intended in this paper to prescribe a remedy, but only to point out the vital defect. Any one of the remedies proposed from time to time to Congress by the proper military advisers of the nation would do well enough, in the beginning at least. But for the sake of common sense, if not for the sake of our people, let some military statesman arise to champion and expound the policy enunciated by Washington, "In time of peace prepare for war."

J. A. DAPRAY.